



Bullying (including Cyber Bullying) and Harassment Policy

Background

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that **bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.**

Purpose

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.
- To actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community.

Implementation

What are bullying, cyber bullying and harassment?

- Bullying is the deliberate intention to harm someone who does not have the power to stop it.
- Bullying, harassment or any form of discrimination, is immoral and can be unlawful because it interferes with the right of a person to feel safe and valued as a member of a community.
- Bullying takes many forms. It can be:
 - Face-to-face such as fighting, pushing, taunting, insulting, embarrassing, intimidating and invading personal space, AND behind-the-back such as writing threatening or offensive messages, sending distressing emails and writing anonymous notes that are hurtful.
 - Done individually such as a person mocking or teasing someone, AND It can be done as a group by such means as social exclusion or hate group recruitment.
 - Physical, AND Psychological, such as spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.
 - Social, such as ignoring, excluding ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
 - Sexual, which involves behaviours such as unwanted sexual touching, inappropriate joking, exposure, making sexual advances or demeaning someone due to their sexual orientation,



AND racial harassment which involves behaviours such as social exclusion, teasing, taunting and threats based on another person's race.

- The causing of hurt by traditional methods such as punching, kicking and spreading hurtful rumours, AND the causing of hurt by contemporary means such as cyber bullying, sexting, engaging in identity theft or by trashing someone on social networking sites.

The key features of bullying are that it:

- causes hurt and distress,
- is repeated,
- involves the use of power in an unfair way.

Bullying need not always be done by the older or stronger. "Bullying up" is bullying done by the smaller, the younger and the weaker, who either use anonymous means to bully, such as cyber bullying, or overt means to bully, knowing that any retaliation would make the provoked person look like they are the bully.

Symptoms of Bullying

For behavior to be classified as bullying, it needs to involve repeated actions that are designed to cause hurt; not having friends or not being popular isn't necessarily a sign that a person is being bullied. It may simply mean a person lacks inter-personal skills. There is a difference between bullying behavior and what can be described as "normal" interpersonal conflict.

The symptoms associated with bullying include, but are not limited to; not wanting to go to school, anger, tears, depression, low self-esteem and a raft of psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches and stomach aches. Bedwetting and sleeplessness can also be symptoms of bullying, particularly in the young. Withdrawal and reluctance to 'join in' can be a warning sign, as can truancy, misbehavior and aggressive behavior. Cuts, bruising, torn clothing, requests for extra food or money as well as a decline in academic performance can also be clues that a student may be suffering from bullying

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is causing hurt via modern technologies such as the Internet and other forms of social media, and through the use of smart phones and other mobile devices. Cyber bullying is a growing problem in society. Modern technologies empower the individual, even the most unlikely of individuals, with an immense capacity to cause harm. It is also an attractive means of bullying for it can, under certain conditions, be carried out with relative anonymity. Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity it has to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge 'audience'. A dangerous feature of cyber bullying is that it can be done quickly and easily. On an impulse, a person can create emotional havoc for another and do so before the voice of reason hints at the inappropriateness of the action. A further problem with cyber bullying is that the bully is often unaware of the extent of the harm they are causing because cyber bullying seldom occurs face-to-face. The feedback is muted by distance so that the bully is protected from an understanding of the awfulness of their behavior. Cyber bullying represents unlawful activity that may result in police laying charges. Cyber bullying has been linked to depression, self-harm and even suicide

Examples of Cyber bullying:



- Sending hateful or threatening comments or pictures via MSN, mobile phone or the Internet and by social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook
- Using modern technologies to engage in the social exclusion of someone and in hate group recruitment.
- Posting rude, explicit or embarrassing messages or pictures about someone on the Net.
- Stealing someone's identity in order to harm them in some way.
- Putting pressure on a person to send revealing or compromising pictures of themselves.
- Covertly filming, recording or taking a picture of someone and posting the images on the internet to cause hurt.
- 'Outing' and disseminating confidential information about someone.
- 'Flaming' and multi-messaging to clog up a person's electronic system and to cause them distress.
- Using aliases and pseudonyms in chat rooms and on social networking sites in order to harass and upset.
- Engaging in cyber-stalking and the invading of privacy.
- Referring to your school in a negative or disparaging way on the internet.

- Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying.
- The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying.

A. Primary Prevention:

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- A bullying survey and yard survey will be administered and acted upon annually.
- 'You Can Do It' Education program implemented across the school and in the process of evaluation.
- 'Kids Matter' implemented across the school.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying.
- The curriculum to include anti-bullying messages and strategies eg: 'The Friendly Schools'.
- Student Representative Council, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.
- Structured activities available to students at lunch breaks.

B. Early Intervention:

- Promote children and staff reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Classroom teachers and principal on a regular basis reminding students and staff to report incidents of bullying.
- Parents encouraged to contact school if they become aware of a problem.



- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.

C. Intervention:

- Once identified each bully, victim and witness(es) will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.
- If staff bullying persists the principal will commence formal disciplinary action.

D. Post Violation:

- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
 - Exclusion from class.
 - Exclusion from yard.
 - School suspension.
 - Withdrawal of privileges.
 - Ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully.
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours
- Classroom Meetings
- Support Structures
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies
- Rewards for positive behaviour
- Consequences for staff will be individually based and may involve:-
 - Counselling
 - A period of monitoring
 - A formal support group
 - Disciplinary actions

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's 3 year cycle or as needed to comply with DET policy changes.

Certification

This policy was endorsed by School Council at the meeting held on March 2014.

Signed.....

Principal

Signed.....

School Council President